



Policy Interventions

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Institute of Medicine have identified “environmental and policy interventions as the most promising strategies for creating population-wide improvements in eating, physical activity, and weight status.” In the 2001 *Call to Action*, U.S. Surgeon General David Satcher said:

“Many people believe that dealing with overweight and obesity is a personal responsibility. To some degree they are right, but it is also a community responsibility.

- When there are no safe accessible places for children to play or adults to walk, jog or ride a bike, that is a *community responsibility*.
- When school lunchrooms or office cafeterias do not provide healthy and appealing food choices, that is a *community responsibility*.
- When we do not require daily physical education, in our schools, that is a *community responsibility*.”

Policy interventions can take place at the local, state or federal level. The following fact sheets highlight selected state and local policy interventions that promote physical activity and healthy food choices in schools and communities.

Nutrition and Physical Activity: A Policy Resource Guide, February 2005 developed by the Washington State Department of Health lists additional policy options for the private, local and state sectors: http://www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/steps/npa_plcy_grp.htm

School Environment

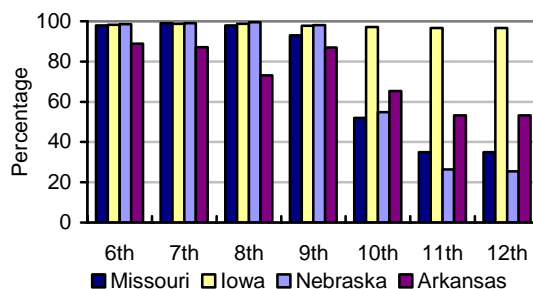
Physical Education

Nationwide, 3.8 percent of elementary schools, 7.9 percent of middle/junior high schools and 2.1 percent of senior high schools provide daily physical education or its equivalent for the entire school year for students in all grades in the school.¹ Missouri, along with our neighboring states requires physical education, however, the time required is limited.

Physical Education Requirements in Missouri

	Current	Recommended
Elementary	50 minutes/week	30 minutes/school day
Middle/Junior High	3,000 minutes/year	45 minutes/school day
High School	1 credit (7,830 minutes) for graduation effective 2010	2 credits for graduation

Schools Requiring Physical Education by Grade



Participation rates relative to physical education classes are also quite low among Missouri school children. The 2007 Missouri Youth Risk Behavior Survey reported 75.9 percent of high school students did not attend daily physical education class; 49 percent reported not being enrolled in a PE class at all during the school year; and 56.5 percent of the high school students reported participating in insufficient moderate physical activity, both inside and outside of school.²

Several studies have found that allocating more curricular time to programs of physical activity does not negatively affect academic achievement, even when time allocated to other subjects is reduced. Other studies found the addition of physical education to the curriculum results in positive gains in academic performance.³

¹ National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. School Health Policies and Programs Study: 2006. Available at <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/shpps/index.htm>.

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Missouri: 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Comprehensive Results*. Available at <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm>.

³ Strong WB et al. Evidence based physical activity for school aged youth. *J Pediatrics* 2005 Jun;146(6):732-7.

School Environment

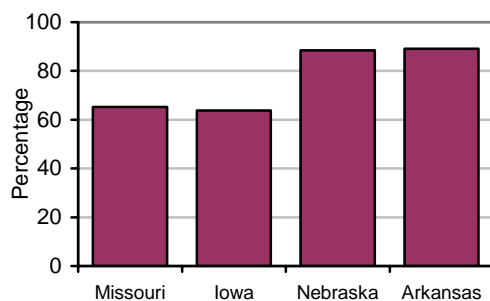
Healthy Eating

Availability of healthy food options and consistent, accurate nutritional information with frequent opportunities to use that information is the foundation of a healthy school nutritional environment. Students should be able to choose healthy food options- whether in the lunchroom, the classroom, at parties or at sports events.⁴

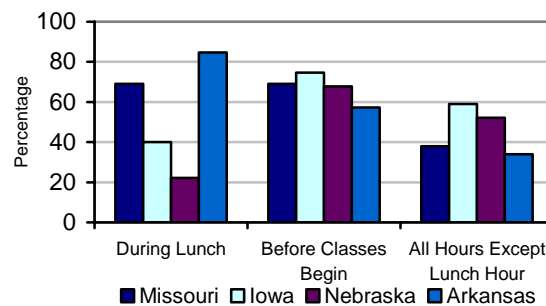
In Missouri, over 500 public and private school districts participate in the National School Breakfast Program and over 700 public and private districts participate in the National School Lunch Program. The U.S. Government Accountability Office indicates that nationally, nearly 9 out of 10 schools sell competitive foods⁵ – foods sold in vending machines, snack bars, for fundraisers, and as a la carte in the cafeteria are all considered competitive foods.⁶ The nutritional value of competitive foods is largely unregulated and typically consists of foods high in sugar, fat and calories and low in nutrients.

The placement and amount of time devoted to school lunches have also been shown to have positive effects on student behavior, consumption of nutrients, and willingness to learn. One study found the intake of macronutrients, calcium and vitamin A consumed were greater among students given 30 minutes versus 20 minutes to eat lunch.^{7 8}

Schools Allowing At Least 20 Minutes For Student to Eat Once Seated



Availability of Snack Foods to Students⁹



⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Guidelines for school health programs to promote life-long healthy eating. MMWR Recommendation Report 1996;45(RR-9):1-41.

⁵ U.S. General Accounting Office, Report to Congressional Requesters: SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAMS, Competitive Foods are Widely Available and Generate Substantial Revenues for Schools. August 2005. Available at <http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-05-563>.

⁶ Committee on Prevention of Obesity in Children and Youth, Food and Nutrition Board, Board on Health Promotion and Disease Prevention: Institute of Medicine of the National Academies. *Preventing Childhood Obesity: Health in the Balance*. Washington D.C.: The National Academies Press, 2005.

⁷ Bergman EA, et al. Relationships of meal and recess schedules to plate waste in elementary schools. *Insight*. Spring 2004;No.24.

⁸ Montana Office of Public Instruction; Team Nutrition USDA. Pilot Project Report: A Recess Before Lunch Policy in Four Montana Schools, April 2002-May 2003. Available at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us>.

⁹ School Health Profiles: Surveillance for Characteristics of Health Education Among Sec-ondary Schools (Profiles 2004). [pdf 1.3 Mb] Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2006. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/profiles/2004/report.pdf>

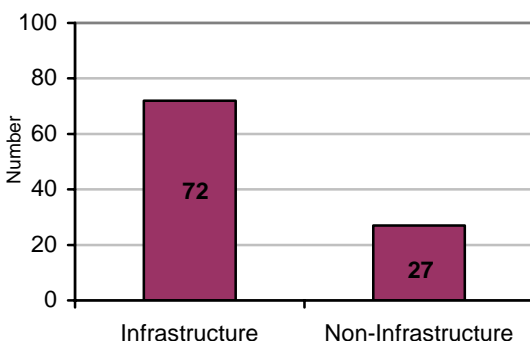
Community Environment

Communities with safe and accessible places to be physically active increase the likelihood that families and individuals will be active. Assuring safe routes so children can walk or bike to school; building ‘greenways’ or trails for walking, biking and running; and using ordinances that include sidewalks in new subdivisions or business developments are examples that promote physical activity in the community.

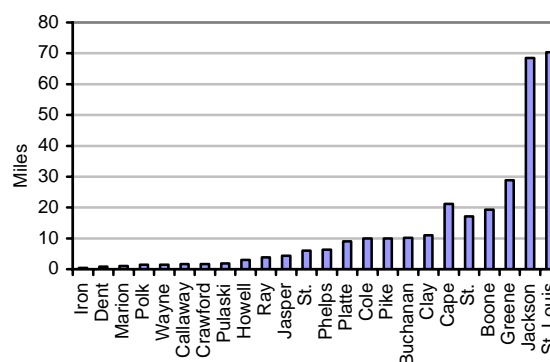
Safe Routes to School

Missouri ranks 18th nationally in the level of funding provided to states through the Safe Routes to School program. In 2007, seventy-two proposals were requests for infrastructure and 27 for non-infrastructure. Infrastructure includes construction or engineered projects such as sidewalk and crossing improvements, traffic calming and speed reduction improvements, and bicycle parking facilities. Non-infrastructure activities include public awareness campaigns, outreach to community media and leaders, traffic enforcement, and student education on bicycle safety. (<http://www.modot.org/safety/documents/SRTSFAQS.pdf>).

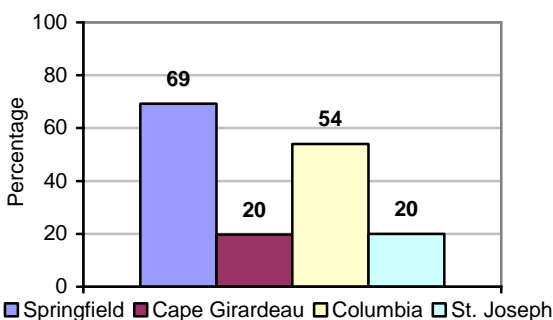
Grant Application Type



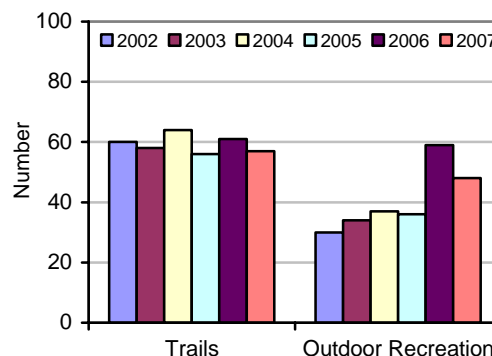
Shared Use Paths in Missouri -2005



Percent of City Streets with Sidewalks



MO Department of Natural Resources Grants for Trails and Outdoor Recreation Facilities



Legislation

Legislative action at the state or local level can impact population-wide efforts to improve nutrition and encourage physical activity. Examples include business tax credits for building trails and fitness centers; earmarking funds for construction of bike lanes; health insurance coverage for nutritional counseling; and requirements for schools regarding nutrition, physical education or physical health assessments for school children.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention tracks state legislative action for nutrition and physical activity, see <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/DNPALeg/>. The table below shows the number of bills that states enacted between 2005 and 2007 in selected categories. The website provides an abstract of bill content with links to the state legislative webpage.

Bills Enacted by States Relating to Nutrition and Physical Activity

Topic Area	2005	2006	2007
School Nutrition	17	10	18
School Wellness (Includes comprehensive approaches, wellness policies, and curriculum integration)	7	4	11
Physical Education (Requires specific amount of time and/or student physical assessment)	9	9	12
Community Nutrition (Includes funding for Farmers Markets, promotion of locally grown food)	0	13	21
Recreation (Includes Safe Routes to School, Trails, Bike Lanes)	8	10	12
Liability Concerns	9	1	0
Tax Credits	1	0	3
Health Insurance	0	3	1